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CARE OF THE HANDS

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Almost any one may have admirable hands. Not all can have artistically beautiful hands, for this presupposes correct bony formation, a feature unchangeable after maturity; but the color, the condition of the skin and nails, strength and grace—these are qualities of the hand over which we have control. Exact agreement with the sculptor's requirements is less important than these matters, which go to make the hand an expression of character. Your progenitors decided the size and general conformation of your hands, but it rests with you to make what you have as perfect as possible. "Your hand, it is a woman in itself."—Browning.

Care of the hands will require a little of your time each day, but you will be well rewarded. Such attention is no whim of vanity but a part of the earnest cultivation of beauty, health, expression, character. Today the woman who does not glory in and cultivate her charms is an anachronism—she belongs far back in the misty past.

Only a trifling expense will be involved. You will need besides resolution which costs nothing but is the hardest thing to keep a slender, curved scissors, a nail cleaner, nail file, an orange-wood stick, a chamois polisher, an emery board and some nail-bleach, paste and powder. Add to these a pure, non-irritating soap, a broad, soft brush and a jar of peroxide cream, and the outfit is complete enough.

Before the nails are manicured the finger-tips should be held in warm water for several minutes. This facilitates filing. Leave an extension of about one-sixteenth of an inch beyond the finger-tip. Operate the file gently, stroking toward the centre. Stubby fingers may be given more length, in appearance, by leaving the nails a little long. On long, thin fingers, they should be filed well back. Do not work the nails to a point, and never cut them.

In turning back the cuticle, it is best to use a cuticle knife, keeping the beveled edge toward the cuticle. Be careful to avoid scraping the nails. The more the cuticle is cut the harder it becomes to keep it back; do not cut it except when loose portions make it really necessary.

To remove stains from the nails use the orange-wood stick dipped in nail-bleach, and remove roughness from the edges of the nails with the emery board. To polish, apply the nail-paste and cover it with the powder. Then use the chamois polisher. An extremely high gloss is not desirable.

But the nails are only one feature of the hand. Its color is one of the most important considerations. Hands should not be ghastly

white; it is a sign of anemia. When they are so, the circulation is weak and must be strengthened by exercise, and bathing with hot and cold water.

Crumple a sheet of newspaper in each hand; hold your arms at your sides and grip and relax till your hands are slightly tired. Hold the grip only momentarily; otherwise the tensed muscles press upon the blood-vessels and defeat the purpose of quickening the circulation to the hands. Do not be afraid of developing a little muscle in your hands. The strong hand is the admired type today; the frail, anemic, tapering hand has given place to the broader, thicker one; the change keeping pace significantly with woman's general advance in the world's progress. Tennis, golf and rowing are gaining legions of women adherents, and such sports have been the prime specific factor in changing female hands for the better. Every woman who cares for beautiful well-shaped hands should adopt some such hobby. After exercise, bathe the hands in hot then cold water. Immerse them a few moments in the hot then plunge them into the cold, and continue for several alternations. This will, of itself, in a few weeks improve the color of the most anemic hands.

Some women complain of stiffness in their hands. Often this condition is the result of long, heavy work, but sometimes it is from lack of use. In either case, try massaging olive oil into the hands just before exercising them. The muscular movements will cause the lubricant to permeate the tissues thoroughly. Those who exercise little should at least make the water treatment suggested a part of their morning ablutions.

To remove stains from the hands there is nothing better than lemon juice. A bit of pumice stone is excellent for the same purpose. After washing the hands, rinse them well and use a soft, absorbent towel. Imperfect drying causes roughness and chapping. For chapped hands, I recommend glycerin and lemon juice, in equal parts. To half a pint of the mixture may be added eight or ten drops of carbolic acid. Nightly application of this simple preparation will go a long way toward keeping "working hands" in good condition. Also, real peroxide cream is hard to surpass, for all-round purposes. Whatever emollient is chosen should be well rubbed in until it is thoroughly absorbed.

Excessive perspiration of the hands is a frequent complaint. There are many popular remedies for this; but usually they are not very successful—except for temporary relief. The cause is a systemic one, lying in some derangement of general health. Nervous disorders are most frequently to blame, and a real cure requires an all-round toning up of the system, with particular attention to the nerves. As a temporary remedy, about the best thing is a solution of borax in alcohol. With palm to palm, rub it in vigorously.